

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



INTERRUPTION OF OUR MINING OPERATIONS.

A RATTLESNAKE AT THE DIGGINGS, AND OTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF SHASTA PLAINS.

THE remembrance of Shasta Plains is always associated in my mind with the images of snakes, from the fact that these reptiles abounded there in numbers that would delight the heart of Dr. Andrew Smith or Mr. Frank Buckland and thoroughly disgust everybody else. One day we had a curious adventure with a rattlesnake. It happened that we had exhausted the precious deposits of the "bar" portion of our claim; so we turned our attention to the bank, which was some nine or ten feet in height,

and commenced making a cave-like incision in its face, with the design of ultimately penetrating from thence downwards to the bed-rock. The point at which we made our excavation was just beneath a fine old pine-tree, amongst whose roots we committed great havoc, for which wrongs the old monarch of the woods in some sort revenged himself, by taking advantage of every little gust of wind that agitated his branches to rattle down soil and pebbles on our sacrilegious heads. Under fear of being buried alive, these earthy showers at first alarmed us considerably, and at every fresh gust of wind we scampered forth from our hole. But gradually

we got accustomed to this phenomenon, and paid very little attention to it; for it is by no means a trifle that will deter gold-diggers from pursuing their operations. So with spade and pick we delved beneath the old pine-tree, and even cut away his tap-root, speculating not a little on the nuggets we should realize on getting down to the bed-rock. Strange as it may appear, old miners have a great fancy, or superstition—call it which you will—for mining beneath a tree; and it is certainly an undeniable fact that large nuggets have been found interlaced in their roots, in the most curious of fashions. We had been working for the best part of a day and a half at our singular mine, and already made an excavation of such dimensions that three of us were able to work in it at once, when a gust of wind, stronger than ordinary, bringing a miniature avalanche of *débris* upon our heads, caused each of us to look up to the insecure roof. No wonder that the sight that met our eyes extracted a general cry of dismay; for, lo! half his body hanging out of a hole which the late earth-fall had exposed, and writhing, twining, and twisting in a manner that bade fair instantly to bring him down upon us, we beheld a huge rattlesnake. Here was a modern version of the sword of Damocles! No alarm of fire in a crowded hall, or a *sauve qui peut* on the field of battle, ever caused a more animated stampede than took place from our little cave.

Throwing down our tools pellmell, with much contention as to who should first escape, we struggled forth into the outer air just in time to avoid the snake as he fell down into the mine. Our two other companions, stationed at the rocker, by the side of the creek, did not know what to make of our rapid movement, and stared at us in wild amazement. But, when a breathless explanation was offered, the ludicrous nature of the affair overruled their sympathy for the great danger to which we had been exposed, and they laughed loud and long, till in self-defence we were forced to join them. Our merriment at an end, it was necessary to turn our attention to the situation, which, to say the least of it, was embarrassing. Here was the enemy in possession not only of our mine but of our very mining tools. That he must be dislodged was evident; but how? Firearms were of little avail in a case like this; and in the obscurity of the limited dimensions of the cave a personal rencontre was too hazardous to be for a moment entertained. At length a reminiscence of the successful expedient of a certain French general in Algeria in a similar case, save that he had Arabs to deal with and we had only a snake, presented itself to me as the best solution of our difficulty. Collecting, therefore, a quantity of dry brushwood, we set it on fire, and, approaching as near as was safe to the enemy's citadel, cast it down upon him. Our stratagem was perfectly successful. The flat, sinister-looking head of the snake protruded from the dense smoke that issued from the mouth of the cave, and was shortly followed by his whole body. Then the reptile rapidly glided away by the foot of the bank, in search of cover. But his attempt at evasion was vain. A tap from a stick dislocated his vertebre, and he surrendered up his life. On examination his tail was found to possess seven rattles, each rattle being supposed to denote one year of his existence. His extraordinary appearance from the roof of our mine is easily accounted for. His usual retreat had, no doubt, been amid the roots of the old pine-tree, which, as we have seen, our mining operations had disturbed.

From the instinctive feeling one always experiences to destroy a snake when at large, it would seem that the ancient feud between man and reptile is far from

being extinct. On the view hollow being raised of a snake at the mines, all the men round about, no matter how they were engaged, would immediately abandon everything else to join in a chase not devoid of danger but utterly profitless. But it is not for a moment to be supposed that it is only necessary to see a snake to be able to kill him. On the contrary, I should say that quite half the snakes we hunted escaped our best efforts. This does not arise from any peculiar tenacity of life that a snake possesses, as nothing is more easy than to administer the *coup de grace*; but, in the first place, his coat assimilates so closely in colour to the ground that his movements are not very easily followed, and it is necessary to use great caution in approaching him. In the second place, no one could realize, till he experienced it, the speed to which a large snake can attain by the apparently very limited means of locomotion at his command. When alarmed, he speeds towards his usual cover at a pace that requires you to run to overtake him; and if once he attains that cover, seldom far off, which may be either a hole under a rock, or thick underwood, a hollow log, or under the foot of a tree, he almost invariably escapes. When living in a country infested with these creatures, the uncomfortable sensation of their possible proximity always seems to haunt one, and is extremely harassing. For choice, I would rather live in a country infested by wild beasts than venomous reptiles. The former have their customary haunts, into which, if we intrude, we know the danger we have provoked, and are prepared to avoid or repel it; but with the latter we are never safe. The crawling, noiseless, subtle snake may be anywhere, out or in-doors, ambushed in the underwood through which you pass, beneath the log you tread upon or in that you take up to throw on the fire, in the timber of your house, nay—for I have heard of a well-authenticated case—in your very bed.

Sitting round our camp-fire on the night of our adventure in the cave, our conversation naturally ran upon snakes, and many curious anecdotes were related of them.

"A slight fluttering of the heart," said one of our party, "to which I am occasionally subject, I always date from an *alerte* I received from a member of the reptile kingdom which scared me as I have never been scared before or hope to be again. I was then staying at a Mexican rancho a few miles from Monterey. For a wonder, in that part of the world, my Mexican host possessed a garden, which had been constructed at a period when the gold-placers were unknown, and labour consequently cheap, as was evidenced by its being encompassed by a fine hedge of a species of cactus which must necessarily have taken some years to arrive at its present luxurious growth. One evening at dusk, having occasion to enter this garden to cut a pumpkin for supper, I was unable to discover the rude wooden latch that fastened the gate, in consequence of the foliage of the hedge having completely overgrown and obscured the gate-post.

"Thrusting my arm at hap-hazard into the hedge, in the direction in which I expected to find the fastening, to my horror something moved under my hand, and the dreadful truth struck me that it was a snake. In this emergency I fortunately acted with considerable presence of mind. Knowing that nothing excites a snake's ire so much as an abrupt movement which he regards as aggressive, and consequently seeks to return by a bite, with the immobility of a statue I remained for perhaps the space of a quarter of a minute, which seemed to me hours, while beneath the palm of my

hand slowly dragged the cold horny length of what must have been an immense snake. As it passed I convulsively snatched away my hand and breathed again. But I need hardly remark that I returned pumpkinless to the hacienda (farm-house), with my previous visions of supper effectually dispelled."

In my turn I related a snake episode which occurred to me during my residence at Umpqua. One day, in company with a friend, I took a trip up the river to Scotsburg, the "city" at the head of the navigation. The distance of Scotsburg from Umpqua, some thirty miles, was only considered a fair day's pull; but now, in consequence of a freshet in the river, which much impeded our efforts, night closed upon us and we found ourselves still some six or seven miles from our destination, while the current that set against us grew every minute more difficult to stem. Under these circumstances, and finding ourselves rather knocked up with our exertions, we resolved to camp for the night, and finish the remainder of our voyage the next morning. We were more inclined to come to this conclusion from the fact that we were close upon a point of the river by which stood a small log-hut, which some hopeful-minded maniac in this out-of-the-world region had built on a bit of low swampy ground, with a view to settling, but in consequence, no doubt, of a temporary lapse to reason had ultimately abandoned. With some little difficulty we made out this undesirable residence, which, with its shattered door, roof deficient in shingles, and dank aspect generally, presented anything but an inviting appearance. But backwoods *voyageurs* are not over-nice in their requirements; and when we had lighted a roaring fire of huge logs on the capacious hearth, cooked and eaten our suppers and lighted our pipes, the interior of the deserted hut appeared almost cheerful in our eyes. When we commenced to spread our blankets, with a view of retiring to rest, I noticed for the first time that the floor was covered with a species of rude matting, composed of reeds such as the Indians weave. As this was a slight modification for the better of the rude split logs or bare earth which are the legitimate floors of a log-hut, I was disposed to congratulate myself on the circumstance, only, however, to add another proof of man's mental short-sightedness. With our feet to the blaze, as usual, we soon fell asleep; and I believe three or four hours must have elapsed, when I awoke from a deep slumber and rose to replenish the fire. As by my ministrations the flames burned brightly up, they gleamed on an object in the farther corner of the hut which seemed to sparkle brilliantly. For the first moment my heavy eyes, still under the influence of sleep, did not allow me to make out what this said object was; at the next, a conviction of its real nature flashed across my mind and caused me to become painfully wide awake. For now I distinctly saw before me a full-grown specimen of the striped white, yellow, and black snake of the country, whose bite, though the reptile never attains a greater length than four feet, is considered equally as fatal as that of the dreaded rattlesnake. The creature, having originally crept in through the shattered door, had perhaps been for weeks lurking beneath the matting, till, attracted by the heat of the fire, it had gradually emerged from its hiding-place and was slowly approaching us. In haste I woke up my comrade, and between us we speedily despatched the intruder; but there is little doubt that my opportune waking had saved us from a great peril, as most likely the snake would have ensconced itself in the blankets of one or the other of us, to deal perhaps a fatal blow on the first movement of the sleeper. Be that as it may, this unpleasant

surprise left us in no mood to sleep again that night, for we were naturally suspicious that our nocturnal visitant was not without companions; and after a weary vigil we were delighted to greet the appearance of the cheerful dawn, which permitted us again to betake ourselves to our boat and pull for Scotsburg.

To wind up our conversation on reptiles, another of our party, an Irishman, somewhat given to superstition, proceeded to draw a most favourable augury for the success of our new mine from the appearance of the snake on the scene of action. In support of his theory he related many astonishing legends of serpents being constituted guardians of hidden treasures, which they jealously watch; of the king of the serpents, who is supposed to wear a precious jewel on his head; with much more I do not now remember. For the sake of romance, and not forgetting its bearings on my own privy purse, I am sorry to have to add that the Hibernian's pleasing anticipation turned out a delusion and a snare; for, on working our mine down to the bed-rock, only a few small pockets were discovered, which proved just moderately remunerative and nothing more.

The notion which ancient legends and our childhood fairy-tales alike inculcate, of associating together reptile and mineral, snake and gold, must have arisen from the fact that the twain are really often found together. But I need not say that this is easily accounted for by natural causes, inasmuch as the dry, rocky, slaty district of high and arid temperature, which gold generally affects, is also extremely favourable to the development of the reptile kingdom.

Shasta Plains, at the period of which I am writing, were the most northerly mines in all California, and, as they bore a good character for yielding well, it is not surprising that they had attracted a numerous body of adventurers. From the distance of these mines to San Francisco, nearly four hundred miles, and the dangerous nature of the trails that led to them, we were in a manner isolated from other communities, and constituted a small republic in ourselves, of which I have something to say. The population consisted of about two thousand white men; while of females, for a long time, there were barely half-a-dozen. Of course the ladies, from the very scantiness of their numbers, were made much of. Talk of attentions—never anywhere were there such attentions seen as were lavished on the sex as at Shasta. The young miners were constantly abandoning their work and coming into the city to look at or chat with the ladies; and any one acquainted with the usual lavish generosity of these gentry may be sure that they did not come empty-handed. They were never tired of making their female acquaintances presents, always of precious ore, in the shape of curious nuggets, quaint specimens of gold and quartz intermixed, and rings, pins, chains, and brooches, which they had caused to be manufactured from their own gold. In a word, could the fair sex, ostrich-like, have been able to breakfast, dine, and sup off the precious metals, I verily believe these gallants would have supplied their meals quite regularly at the proper hours. When I add that the married ladies were thus munificently treated, and that the single ones, immediately on their arrival at the mines, were the objects of a tremendous rush of eligible bachelors, from whom they were implored to select a husband, I think that I am pretty correct in stating that Shasta was the El Dorado of the fair sex.

As usual in small republics, politics ran very high with us. The Oregon men, who mustered very strongly at Shasta, always leagued together on every public question, while the other States people opposed them.

The antagonism of these two bodies-politic on the occasion of the election of the alcalde or mayor caused political excitement to reach its culminating point, producing much bad language and ill blood. In the end, the candidate of the Oregon men carried the day. When the reader hears that we had a mayor and other legal officials, he will naturally suppose that law and order prevailed at Shasta; but I am sorry to have to undeceive him. Law and the law's observance were not to be found at those diggings. It is true, though, that we had a burlesque in their place. I remember a ludicrous but melancholy instance of this. A miner had lost his horse, and found him in the possession of another miner, who refused to give him up, alleging that he had legally bought the animal of a third party. Not caring to fight a duel to decide the dispute—I grieve to say the regular course at Shasta—number one miner cites number two before the alcalde. In order to try the case the alcalde and his officers take possession of the largest tent in the city, and proceed to swear in a jury. Now the tent in question is a gambling saloon, and contains several play-tables, and before one of these the high dignitary takes his seat. But, as somebody remarks that "it don't look well," which it does not, the *roulette* wheel and figured cloth is taken away, to make room for his worship's law-books, represented on this occasion by a fig of tobacco, a knife, and a whistling stick. Then the public are admitted into court till it is inconveniently full, and the trial begins. The counsel for the prosecutor and defendant, two clever but dissipated States lawyers, argue the case with really a great deal of shrewdness, but considerably more humour, for the majority present expect fun, and they must not be disappointed; so, in the language of reporters, the court is continually convulsed. At the end of the case the alcalde, who has understood nothing of the legal jargon of the lawyers, and is quite obtuse to their sallies of wit, has gone quietly to sleep. He is woken up with considerable difficulty to address the jury. "Gents of the jury," he says, with a broad grin on his broad face, "I expect you've heard both sides; and now I guess you're jest bound to find a verdict for one or t'other." "Yes, sir." After a short consultation the jury find a verdict for plaintiff. The horse, then, is his. But does he get it? Well, no, he does not. The defendant, having heard the adverse verdict with the greatest demonstrations of disrespect, hies him away to his tent and stands over his horse, six-shooter in hand, vowing to lay any man in his tracks that dares to lay hands on him. Now, as no one will help the prosecutor to take possession of his rightful property, the verdict he has obtained is neither more nor less than a dead letter, and he is really just in the position in which he stood before going into court. He may afterwards, perhaps, be induced to make some arrangement with the real owner of the horse; but such, I am sorry to say, was the deplorable state of things called by a misnomer "law" in the Far West.

At the mines, as in San Francisco, the gamblers, or sportsmen, as they are called in the western States, were allowed to fleece the public without being called to account. It will hardly be credited that many miners who had worked at their claims all the season, and by the most exhausting toil and great self-denial had accumulated a large sum, were mad enough to enter the gambling tents, and, throwing down their pile in its wash-leathern bag on the play-table, set it all on the chance of a single card, exclaiming, "Home or the diggings!" I need not say that in all such cases the diggings was the invariable destination of these misguided men.

"Piles," though, are lost in California in other ways besides the gambling-table. A very singular affair occurred in connection with the "pile of one of ours." It was the end of the mining season, and we had all pretty heavy purses. Now, as there are no banks or other places to deposit gold-dust safely at the mines, it was usual, when one's purse got too heavy to be carried readily on the person, to "cache" or hide it, only reserving a small quantity of dust wherewith to pay current expenses. This will explain what now occurred. Our Irish comrade had gone into the city to purchase provisions, and during his absence we moved our tent to a more eligible spot about a hundred yards away. Comfortably installed on our new camping-ground, we were sitting round our camp-fire in the evening, discussing our suppers, when our comrade made his appearance. Catching sight of our camp-fire, he uttered a loud exclamation, and then, like one demented, seized hold of a spade and scattered the embers of our fire right and left, to the utter detriment of the contents of our coffee-pot and frying-pan. "The man's drunk or mad!" we shouted. Not he; with a few hasty strokes of his spade he quickly disinterred—what do you suppose? *His bag of gold-dust!* In a word, by one of the most extraordinary coincidences I have ever heard or read of, we had, of course unknowingly, lighted our camp-fire exactly over the "cache" where he kept four hundred pounds' worth of gold.

Something similar, but more wonderful, if true, I was told, befel another miner's "pile." It consisted of one hundred Spanish doubloons, above three hundred pounds. Finding that the weight of his treasure greatly embarrassed his efforts when working his claim, the owner determined to "cache" it. Now this miner was a very clever man, surprisingly so; and he concerted a plan to hide his doubloons that said a great deal for his cleverness. Borrowing an auger, he proceeded into the neighbouring wood one evening, and, selecting a tree, he first of all carefully detached a small piece of bark about the size of a crown piece from the trunk, and then commenced to bore a hole. Into this hole, which they fitted to a nicety, he thrust his doubloons, and over them he replaced the bit of bark. So neatly was the whole operation performed that the most prying eye could not detect the fracture. Glowing all over with pride, the clever one went home convinced that a "cache" so original and so entirely safe none but he could have invented. It was safe, very; in fact so safe that, when he went to admire it the next day, he *couldn't find it himself*; nor the next day, nor the next. In fine, this clever man at last gave up looking for it in despair. Weeks passed away; and now comes the climax of the story, sounding, I must confess, a *little* apocryphal. The unfortunate miner was sitting one evening by his camp-fire brooding over his misfortunes, when he perceived that the fire wanted replenishing. Going to the wood-heap near at hand, he selected a log, and was just about to throw it into the blaze, when a peculiar appearance about it startled him. With a wild cry and a hurried examination he clasped it to his heart. It was the piece of the tree in which was concealed his long-lost treasure.*

BUSINESS.

BUSINESS is business. This is the peremptory maxim of many who would be puzzled to define the word, and yet feel that it stands for something quite distinct from

* We are indebted for this paper to the author of "Adventures in the Far West," which appeared in "The Leisure Hour" volume for 1862.

other occupations which they pursue either for pleasure or of necessity. A man may be pressed with cares, or absorbed in entertaining studies, which have nothing to do with his business. He may meet the first bravely, and follow the other methodically; and yet both may be wholly separated from the work of his life, that special work which is involved in his vocation or calling, and is expected of him by the other bees in the hive. To that he must give his best days, and the best hours of his day. Whatever other duties he has to perform must, as a rule, make way for business. They must be attended to before or after hours, however important. Unless (as in the case of accident, fire, and the like) they are of so sudden and pressing a nature as to justify obviously the neglect of the regular day's work, they must wait till the work be done. You must feed your master's pigs before you sit down to your own supper.

No doubt the due discharge of business intimately concerns your success in life and its enjoyment; but, in order that it may be done aright, it should be separated from everything else in its performance. Don't mix it up with pleasure, nor with your household and domestic duties. If you wish to enjoy your rest, your meals, and the society of your family or friends, work up to the last stroke of business hours, and then put it by. It gives an additional charm to life when we can divide and apportion it thoroughly. As the pleasures of a tour are made more extensive and various by moving to fresh places, so the wholesome use and entertainment of the day is secured by the shutting of the shop, the quitting of the office, or by any definite breaking off of the chief work of life, in order to mingle with our families, which surround us with another atmosphere and set of objects for our interest. Work when you work, and play when you play; otherwise your business is interrupted by suspicious amusement, which you can't enjoy, as it has a clandestine, reproachful taste; or your rest is marred by the intrusion of careful thought, which, like the dead fly in the perfume, mingles with it an alien scent fatal to the flavour of your pleasure. In short, business is business. Let it have its fixed hours, in which you do it with all your might fervently. Then you are better able to rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep. I do not mean that your calling, however secular, should be unsanctified by Christian sympathy—far from it; but there will be a self-repressing, I had almost said stern and mechanical air about your discharge of the dull round of duty which compels you to plod on in the prescribed routine, though your thoughts are sore tempted to wander off to some more congenial object. The true man of business will set his nets, sell his wares, visit his patients, plead in court, drill his regiment, or sweep his street, with patient effort at attention, though his house be full of visitors, or his child sick, or his tooth ache. He has certain things to be done, and if he be a man of good stuff and grit, he will do them, however irksome the task. This is not selfishness, but may be its very opposite—a sense of high Christian devotion. They are the weak and sentimental who catch at any excuse to leave the duties of their calling.

No wise man, however, will make himself a slave to business. He will keep the upper hand of it, know when to dismiss, when to take it up. Without letting his feelings interfere with his proper work, he will yet remember that work is not the only end of life. He will allow that margin to the play of his natural affections without which he would degenerate into a mere mechanical animal, and lose that zest and spring of

energy which saves his business from becoming an intolerable source of toil. His hours of rest and recreation will aid him in his work indirectly, not by affording him an opportunity to gather up the threads of his calling over time, but by keeping alive the central fire of life, without which no work can be effectually done. Properly speaking, man lives to work; he does not work to live. He is himself better than his vocation; and if he lets the care of that wholly occupy and exhaust him, he sacrifices the greater to the less, and makes the things which should have been for his wealth become unto him an occasion of falling. Take the lowest ground, and suppose that a man toils beyond the limits of legitimate endurance, in order to amass a fortune or raise the prospects of a family—what is the frequent result? He unfits himself for the use and enjoyment of that fortune, or deprives his family of that length of life or intercourse which is needed to protect and influence it. It is a great mistake to be busy over much. There are jaded slaves who come home with no reserve of love for, or even interest in, those who are dear to them. They are almost strangers in their own houses. They hardly speak to their own wives; they hardly see their own children. Business is business, and has no right to encroach upon the claims of affection. He is worse than a slave who, not content with working when he ought to work, robs his dependents of their share of himself, by spending his whole energy in labour, which leaves him none to bear his part in the burdens of home. No man is intended to be a mere income or wages pump. He must win bread, but he must win love too. He who gives himself no time to play with his children, injures them, as well as the man who neglects to work for their support.

Whoever is ashamed of his proper lawful business is a fool. He ought to be miserable who feels that he has no definite place or calling in the world. He need not have a special trade or profession, but he must have some imperative duties connected with his position. For a man to say that he has nothing to do is to say that he is worth nothing. Any one, not an idiot, who seeks only his own amusement is as useless as a shoe which is always being polished but never worn. Your professional jester fills a more honourable place in the world than the habitual idler whom he helps to entertain.

So far from being ashamed of a trade or business, and anxious to get out of it, a true man rejoices in the fact of his having a recognised standing-ground among his fellows. Do credit to your business, whatever it is, so long as it be honest, and it will reflect honour upon you. Be ashamed of it, and then it will pursue you with incessant disgrace or humiliation.

Avoid business dealings with friends and relations as much as possible. There is a sacred charm in the circle of blood and intimacy which is endangered, or at least dimmed, by the exercise of that carefulness and honest precaution which should characterize the pursuit of your calling in the world. But, if you must transact business with those towards whom you like to behave in a wholly unguarded and indulgent spirit, do not let any sentiment or delicacy hinder the strictest and most prosaic understanding. Many a family has been distressed by the loose way in which matters of importance have been arranged between those who thought they understood one another well enough to dispense with the usual forms of precision and security. Business is business, though you transact it with a brother or a child.

Let me say, lastly, do not be in a hurry to retire from

the great work of your life. Work as long as you can. There are men who have found the coveted repose of their latter years a bitter disappointment. Keep the reins in your hand while you can hold them. The charm of leisure often vanishes when it is relieved by no immediate occupation or anxiety. You may delegate to others much that you used to do yourself; but consider well before you step out of your place, as long as you have health and energy to fill it. If you are worn out you must give up; but it is a melancholy sight to see the rust gather on the last years of your life. However well you may have worked, it is sad to feel yourself outside the circle in which you have laboured for the best of your days. Final retirement from business, in search of the pleasure of unbroken repose, often turns out to be a sort of moral suicide, in which you find that you have cut yourself off from much that you were dependent upon. Though business is business, you may discover at last that it has charms, without which there can be but small enjoyment of life.

THE IDLER ON THE RHINE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE REGULAR SWISS ROUND."

III.

On leaving Bonn we stopped at the little station of Mehlem, about half a mile from the bank of the river, and, getting a truck for our luggage, walked down to the ferry opposite Königswinter. It was one of those flying barges, anchored ever so far up the stream, and then made to sidle across by the current. It soon grated on the shore at the door of the "Hôtel Berlin," where we got a pleasant room, with two windows looking out upon the Rhine. The charm of a day's settlement like this, however, is sure to be broken somehow, in a tourist-haunted place. When we left the Mehlem station, having engaged a porter, two or three volunteers, rivals or friends of his, insisted on accompanying us. One could talk a little English, and brought out a succession of small phrases which I believe he hardly understood; for I addressed some, lucid enough, I thought, to him, without shaking him off. He crossed the ferry with us, and then stationed himself under our windows with a face of remonstrance. It is not pleasant, when you first reach the chief object of your tour, to be stared at insolently by a German cad. This fellow did nothing but pester us, and then expected to be paid for it. I dare say he had many times been bought off, and am happy to reflect that he kept guard under our window ever so long in vain.

When we had shaken ourselves down a little, I found that there were still two hours before dinner; so I set off to walk to the top of the Drachenfels. This is the hill of the neighbourhood; for, though it is but one of seven which form the group, and not quite the highest of these, still it abuts on the river, possesses the most famous and striking castle on its top, has accumulated more legends, and commands a better view than all the rest put together.

The ascent is perfectly easy, and, to those at all accustomed to Switzerland, absurdly short for anything calling itself a mountain. I looked at my watch on leaving the inn door, and again when I stood on the ruined platform of the castle on the summit, and found that I had been exactly thirty-six minutes walking up. Let us say that it would take ladies and donkeys an hour. There are generally plenty of both of these creatures on the road, and I could hardly say which are the most slow and brilliant: the donkeys, I think, for the

trimmings of their saddles and bridles are all bright red; and, though the way seemed to weary the feet of some of its fair travellers, especially the stoutest, who toiled up with protests and parasols, yet the donkeys exhibited a reserve of sloth, an excellence of leisurely motion, and a profound indifference to the scenery and legends, which no smart clothing could disguise. But an old, lazy, subjective German donkey, with a fat, middle-aged German frau on his back, together displayed the slowest pace consistent with any progress at all. I met divers parties ascending and descending. They were all foreigners, and towards the top all seemed to have written their names. I never saw more records of tourists' visits. How it was managed I could not make out, but managed it somehow was. The names were mostly written, or rather painted, in large, rude letters, with blue paint. There was hardly an available surface which was not covered with them. I did not see a single English signature or inscription. No doubt there were some, but the crowd of foreign scrawls and daubs swallowed up any modest little cuttings or pencil-marks of the travelled English snob.

Well, this was not very romantic; and yet it was the spot where the glories of the Rhine are confidently said by the guide-books to commence. Murray calls the Drachenfels and its sister hills "mountains;" and even the sober Baedeker, cunning in inns and dry in statistics, gives us three stanzas of Byron, that we may know what to think when we visit "The Castled Crag of Drachenfels," which "frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine."

The walk, however, is very beautiful. It passes through vineyards, and is skirted by acacias, mountain ash, and other shrubs, above which the chief tower of the ruin shows here and there, as you follow the winding path. Every now and then, too, you get peeps at the Rhine, hurrying by till it shines in the distance under the setting sun. The view from the top is very lovely. There is a resting-place, with an inn or public-house some five minutes short of this, where you may get beer and scenery together, and buy little toy models of the castle. These last exhibit an absurd defiance of proportion; for the artist generally introduces a doll tourist and donkey, the latter scrupulously habited in scraps of red cloth, but both nearly as big as the castle itself.

Declining these natural curiosities, I walked on to the castle, and, having resisted the importunity of an old woman who wanted me to buy a green garland, sat down on a stone, and enjoyed the view.

Behind me lay the rest of the seven mountains, beneath lay the Rhine, which the ancient rascal who built the tower at my back had so often set his lawless retainers to watch for passing merchandise, in quaint, old-fashioned boats, that he might bundle down and rob them. True, they were feudal subjects, after a sort, to the neighbouring Archbishop of Cologne; but, however little liberty of conscience in theology was allowed by some of those old ecclesiastical potentates, considerable liberty of action, in matters secular, was winked at in those who had a strong arm to support a covetous will. If your brigand is ready to kiss the pope's toe, he is permitted to cut the traveller's throat.

Far away to the right, some twenty miles off, you can just see Cologne, and with your glass make out the crane upon its tower stump; while, closer on the opposite bank, is the town of Bonn. To your left lie the convent of Nonnenwerth and the castle of Rolandseck. The hills of which the Drachenfels forms one, are, as I have said, considered the wildest and highest on the banks of the Rhine, and are of volcanic origin, and consist in part of lava, shored up time out mind, when the whole neigh-

bourhood was on the boil. Ruins themselves, they are almost all capped with some ruined castle or stronghold, which bears witness to a strife and disorganization worse than nature's wildest disorder. But now the terrible has melted into the picturesque, and sentimental young ladies furnish their albums and journals with verses on, and photographs of, the tumults of the past. These grim old castles and volcanic hills are charming. We ride red-saddled donkeys and eat ham sandwiches among the bones of the middle ages and the dead fires of past geological epochs.

When I had looked my fill, and again resisted the hag with her green garland, I walked leisurely down out of the fresh breeze, which played round the castle walls, to the hot little village below. My path lay past the school, towards which parties of close-cropped, bullet-headed little boys with slates and books, and little girls with bags and baskets of knitting, were creeping for afternoon lessons. Some were having a last game in the playground before going in, and all struck me as clean and intelligent-looking, while many were above the age of national school children in England. Education is compulsory here; and, much as we boast of our progress and enlightenment, I fancy that any set of these German working-people would put the scholarship of the corresponding class amongst ourselves to shame.

Getting back to our inn, we sat at the open window till dinner was ready, watching the strife between the swift river and the heavy gangs of barges which were being dragged sullenly up against the stream by gasping steam-tugs, now creeping close to the bank where the current ran less strongly, and, when some sheltered reach had been passed, toiling slowly across to get into weaker water on the other side. Every now and then a skiff shot to the landing-beach diagonally from the opposite bank, or a gaudy steamer hurried swiftly down under a cloud of smoke.

There is much variety of craft upon the Rhine, if you may reckon the great wood rafts among them. These, though containing material for many a ship, are really but timber-yards afloat, and look as if they had got into the river by accident, and not with a purpose. Themselves their own cargo, they blunder clumsily downstream, their crews tugging with long sweeps to coax them into the swifter parts of the current. Thus, by the very necessities of their progress, they avoid collision with the heavy merchandise, which is being towed in a contrary direction. Some of these rafts are of very great size, and represent a valuable amount of timber. Starting from some hill-side on the upper portion of the river or a tributary, they find their way into the main channel in single logs, which gather more as they progress, each successive contribution being securely clamped and lashed to the nucleus of the raft, until it is perhaps four hundred or five hundred feet long, and fifty broad. The boatmen who navigate it build their huts upon the deck formed by the upper tier of logs, which, though barely above the surface of the water, draws several feet. Murray talks of the concern as a "floating village;" but the habitations were hardly numerous enough on those rafts I saw to justify the name, unless it were that of a village or hamlet in my own country, called "Onehouse."

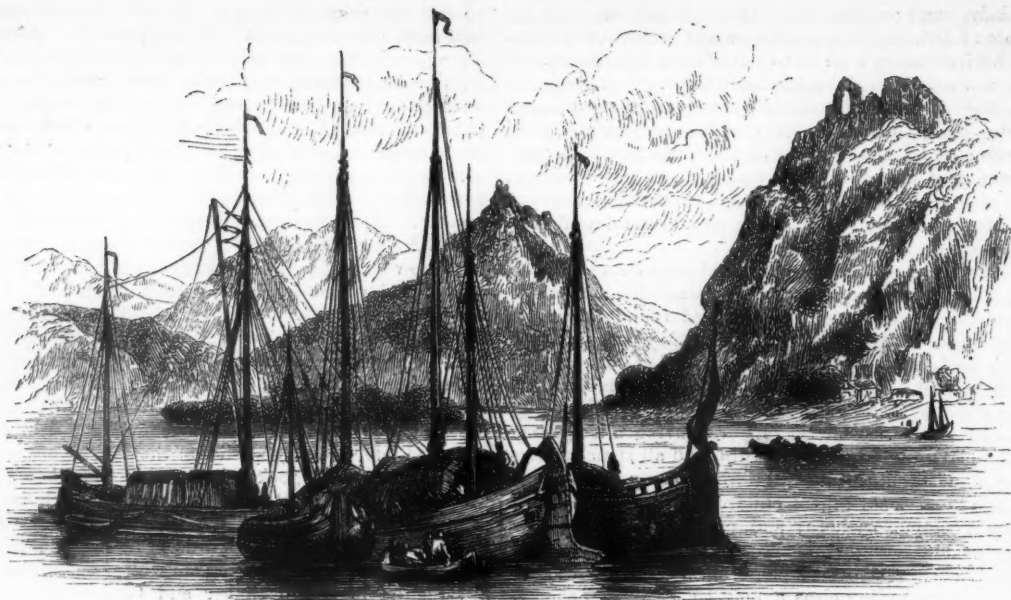
But dinner ought to be ready by this time. I looked into the *salle-à-manger*, and saw only rows of plates, and little dishes of pickles and cucumber, waiting to help in adding their sour condiment to the fare which was still in the kitchen. A stray German student had wandered into the room, apparently on the same errand as myself, and now was playing furiously at a piano in the corner,

to still the cries of hunger. Presently, however, the bell rang, and the guests and food came in. After Sir Francis Head's description of a German dinner, it is with hesitation that I venture to notice some of its peculiarities. There is a French spirit about the business, but a distinctly German body. Dishes which we are accustomed to associate with fixed stages of the meal come in at unexpected moments, the train of food being frequently followed by so solid a final joint as a leg of mutton. There were no English beside ourselves at this Königswinter meal. A young lady on my right, in a low dress, with a white cambric handkerchief loosely tied round her neck, pinned down her food to her plate with her fork, which she held overhanded, and then sliced up the whole ration into pieces, as if she were going to feed a lap-dog or dainty invalid. Then, laying her knife down, she stoked herself rapidly till the platter was bare, and thus throughout the whole repast, which was heavy and long, including fish, which appeared late, and a good slice of the final leg of mutton.

After dinner we took a little stroll, and then sat at the window again, watching the sunset, which set the river in a golden blaze. These Rhine-bank villages are much alike; so that a few words of description will do pretty nearly for all:—A fringe of white houses, showing a structure of brown timber and tiled roofs; behind them a sloping hill covered with young trees or vines, trailed on low sticks like raspberries; a castle in ruins at the top, of course, and shallow, flat-bottomed boats drawn up upon the beach in front. Beneath our window there was a stall full of ripe delicious fruit, some of which we bought and brought up-stairs to eat, and a drain with a strong, steady, pungent stench, which came up of its own accord.

Two of the Rhine steamers, one up and one down, called at the little wooden pier while we sat at the open window. They are roomy boats, painted mostly green and white, to suit the supposed gay sentiment of tourists, and move at a respectable pace; but they struck me as being rather too big and smoky for their business. Of course, when not too large for the character of the navigation, the owners desire to carry as many fares as possible in one trip; yet the crowd on them is sometimes very great, and a great accompanying crowd hinders the quiet reception of Rhine influences more than a small party, however closely packed. You can't get away from the bustle which has driven you to seek a holiday; you carry the chattering multitude along with you in full sight. However, the Rhine steamboats are not intended for tourists alone, since numbers of country people, with their bundles, pipes, and large shabby umbrellas, are ever travelling up and down the great river highway. I think the forepart of these boats is generally as full as the more select after-part; and it is always more pleasant, except when the sun is hot, and you are glad to get under the quarter-deck awning. Otherwise the hinder-end catches all the smuts from the funnel, and breathes the smoke of fifty tobacco pipes which puff in the bows.

But we must not complain; the boats are roomy, and cheap, and clean. In this last respect they are vastly superior to those on the Rhône. These latter are of immense length. They are, I fancy, seldom used by travellers now; but I remember once coming down the Rhône by Lyons to Avignon, before the railway was made, in a steamer three hundred feet long, and dirty in the extreme. The deck was cumbered with merchandise, and the hold so fully devoted to the claims of commerce that the cabin was small and foul; but the trip was a pleasant one, all the more so from the absence of that crowd

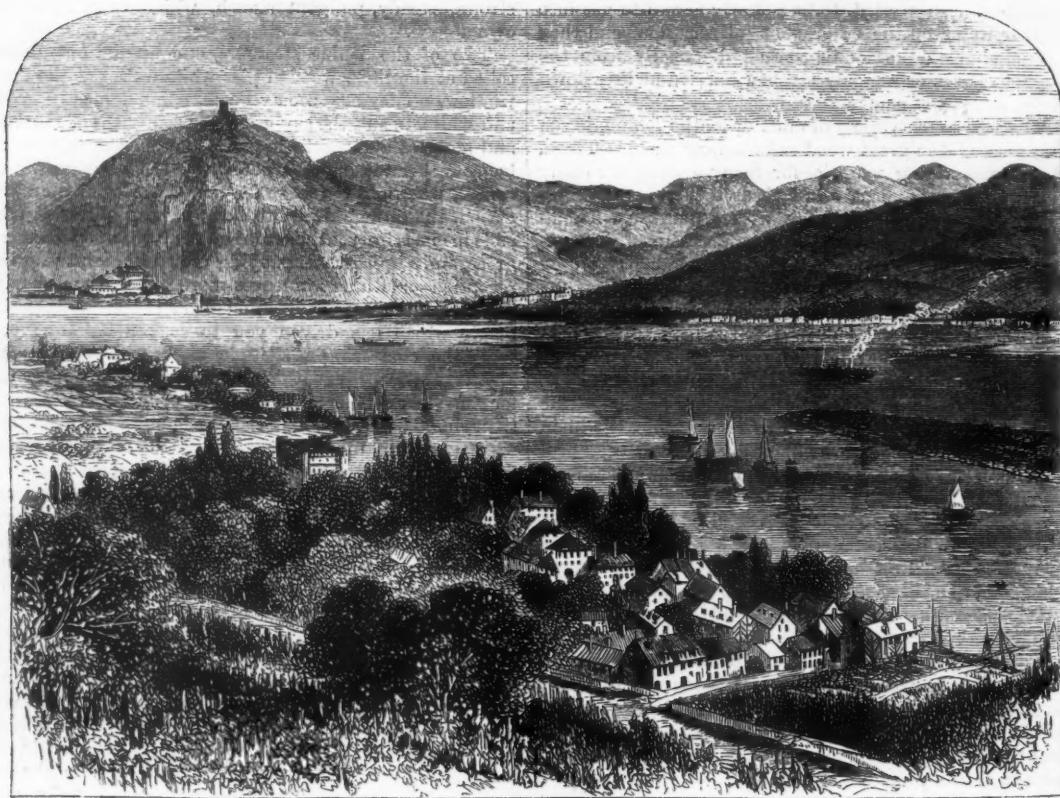


RHINE BOATS.

of staring, chattering tourists, armed with guide-books and opera-glasses, which fill the boats on the Rhine.

From Königswinter we went to Rolandseck. Every

with and became betrothed to the beautiful Hildegunde, the daughter of Count Heribert, Lord of the Seven Mountains; being summoned away, however, to the



DRACHENFELS, FROM ROLANDSECK.

tourist in these parts knows the legend of Roland—how, when seeking adventure along the Rhine, he fell in love

Crusades by Charlemagne, the marriage was put off till his return. Meanwhile, news came of his death, and

the lady, too credulous, took the veil and became an inmate of the convent on the island of Nonnenwerth. But Roland was not dead after all; in time he came back, scarred, and eager to claim his bride. She was a nun, and inaccessible; so he built a castle on a rock which overlooked the nunnery, and paid his devotions in watching Hildegunde when she walked about the convent gardens.

devotion of Roland; the innkeeper, *e.g.*, who keeps the "Roland Hotel," and the donkey-boys, who take you up to the rock whence you have a view of the island which the love-sick crusader watched.

The view from this is very beautiful, independently of the sentiment of the situation. You see the Drachenfels to much better advantage than when you are upon them.

We went from this place to Coblenz by steamer,



TOP OF DRACHENFELS.

Whatever their motives for seclusion, the patience of this lover must have persuaded the nuns that the fickleness of man was no sufficient grounds for shunning the ties of common life. The sex was not so bad after all. What has made this convent of Nonnenwerth famous but that love which it was built mainly to neutralize? When the bell tolled from the chapel for Hildegunde's funeral, Roland sunk into silence, and after a while was found stark dead, but with his open eyes still turned towards the convent chapel.

The romance of the business has lasted longer than the castle, which is now a small fragment of a ruin. Thus even those who cannot enter into it profit by the

stopping at several of the villages on the way. These are marvellously like each other: indeed, the Rhine, from some way below Mayence to Bonn, is rather monotonously picturesque. You meet, as somebody says, a castle out of elbows at every turn, and the pretty brown timbered villages pass the steamer so rapidly that, without great attention to the map and the guide-book, you lose your place and give wrong names to half that you see. Almost all have some Roman origin or tradition about them, which Baedeker, who is, I think, one of the best guides on the Rhine, gives you scrupulously.

Remagen is a place at which you will perhaps stop, for there are several excursions which tourists are

recommended to take from it. There is nothing particular in the place, but you may visit the Laacher See from it in a day. This last is a lake about a mile and a half round, and nearly circular. It is, says Baedeker, not in a crater, but is believed to have been formed by a series of volcanic eruptions which took place in the vicinity. The volcanic agency is not yet quite exhausted, for there is a spot some little way above the level of the lake at which a spring bubbles up much carbonic acid gas and poisons rats and mice and such small deer. We had no great wish to visit the place, having seen about the best of this kind of sight in the neighbourhood of the lake Avernus, near Naples. Still it is, from all accounts, worth a visit, especially to geologists, for whom the country near the banks, on this part of the Rhine, is a harvest-field. Even those who know nothing of lava, basalt, red slag, etc., cannot help seeing the plain marks of mighty forces which once played havoc in these parts. There are many craters, and other evidences of eruption; but those who prefer evidences of later action may find them at Neuwied, somewhat higher up. Here is a community of Moravian brothers, whose establishment well repays inspection. It is curious to find, in the midst of a country with its own peculiar habits and traditions, another small constitution—for such it may be called—with its wheels within wheels. You can find all about it in the guide-books, and very interesting it is.

Some way above Neuwied you pass Weissenthurm, with its tall square watch-tower, and Engers, where there is reason to suppose that *Cæsar's* second passage of the Rhine took place.

But by this time you will have begun to look out for Coblenz, which presently shows itself at the junction of the Moselle with the Rhine. You may know it at once by its bridges, that of boats and the new railway one across the Rhine, and the great mass of the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, which rises on the left.

Having seen you safe into the "Giant Hotel," we will make an end of this chapter.

THE MAIN CHANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CEDAR CREEK," "THE FERRIS FAMILY," ETC.
CHAPTER I.—THE MONEYLESS.

THERE are centres of impecuniosity in our European world whither flock those unfortunates who have failed in the great article of Money, whether in getting it or in keeping it. Our intelligent reader need not be told that this is one of the gravest offences known to modern society, and visited with condignest punishment by all right-thinking persons who are Anybodies. Expatriation is one of the secondary penances for this crime. Hence mainly it comes to pass that the Anglo-Saxon race has encamped in knots in foreign countries, and formed settlements as distinct as Jews. Who does not know the Englishman of broken fortune or seedy reputation on the pier at Boulogne? You will see him from the deck of the Channel steamer as it glides between the long stone arms of the Liane, and lands others of his species to keep him company. Watching these arrivals is a single source of commanding interest to the exile. That packet brings him (perchance) letters and papers from the big British world over the water, where men are still spending money and running in debt. Its departure embodies a meagre chance of his own, some day. It seems a sole connecting cord between him and the rainbow past, before he became chained here, like a shabby modern Prometheus. The

social refugee abounds at Boulogne, likewise at Baden-Baden, at Kissingen, and other Continental towns whose names the aforesaid intelligent reader will easily supply; likewise at a certain insular port of her Britannic Majesty's dominions, being Douglas, in the Isle of Man.

And why has picturesque Douglas been selected as one of the centres of impecuniosity? Wealth might choose to haunt it for the unpurchaseable beauty of its crescent bay, for the salubrity of its air, sweeping from a sea of surpassing clearness to a mountain range of noble outline; but what business has a penniless man with the salubrities of a watering-place or the beauties of nature? These are luxuries appraised and paid for at a high rate by modern tariff, which sets up even the sunbeams and breezes to sale; which would fain fix a turnpike athwart the mountain pass, and exact toll on the leaping brilliance of the cataract.

Douglas is a cheap place, to begin with. If midshipman's half-pay could do anything anywhere, it would be in the Isle of Man. For reasons inscrutable, various taxes which vex the spirit of other subjects of the Queen are unpaid and uncalled for here. No sturdy officials, with offensive bluish books full of receipts, and a quantity of small change always ready, demand a portion of your substance for parish rates. Your handsomest house is scot-free for less than a crown a-year, instead of the mainland system of a complicated per-poundage. Had you an armorial bearing comprising fifty quarterings, you might emblazon it in amplitude on a score of carriages without cash thereby accruing to the Government; and, what is of more consequence to our bankrupt refugee, his groceries pay the merest trifle of duty. The Custom-house has well-nigh a sinecure, except for investigating travellers' luggage. From the valleys under North Barrule and Snaefell come other necessities of life, such as mutton and milk, at the lowest cost. Children can be abundantly fed for a trifle per annum; hence the immigration of large families. Part of an income can stretch as far as a whole one elsewhere; hence the resort of half-pay officers, and persons on allowances. In the Isle of Man the great world's code against poverty is considered relaxed, like other certain laws; it is less derogatory to be poor here than elsewhere.

Because of which reason a certain cottage on one of the heights outside Douglas was inhabited, when our story begins, by Paul Sarsfield, Esquire, and his family. This gentleman was in reality an Esquire. Gentle blood, for more than three generations, met the herald's requirements. And as to Mrs. Paul Sarsfield's gentle blood—was she not a Boisragon, whose ancestor in perpendicular line had come over to England with the Conqueror, and to Ireland with Strongbow? Look in the peerage for offshoots of that noble family, and be convinced that in its veins flows the truest *sangre azul*. The lady had perpetuated the alliance by giving her name to every one of her children, to be worn in priority to the meaner patronymic of Sarsfield. And perhaps it had been well for her worldly fortunes that she were not a Boisragon; she might not have spent so much of her husband's money in keeping up the traditionary grandeurs of the race.

She was lying in the green verandah of the cottage this bright summer evening, having a languor (but not of fatigue) on her very handsome face. The Boisragon females were never strong, and never useful with a common usefulness. To look beautiful was their chief occupation, fulfilled by Mrs. Paul Sarsfield whenever she was not cross. Ill-temper will spoil any beauty; and the blue blood was apt at such seasons to flash up unbecomingly to her features, till forehead and nose were

none the better for it. Now she looked languidly pleased, and very healthy for a prostrate person. Her smooth round hands, symmetrical enough for statuary's models, were lying idly on her lap, or merely occupied with the slight movement of changing her rings, of which she wore several, and those valuable. One of the gems would have purchased a good coat for her husband, and a suit of clothes for the little fellow between his knees, to whom he was teaching something out of a battered book. Evening sunbeams, thickly moted with gold, fell aslant on his seedy brown coat, revealing pitilessly the total want of nap on its well-brushed surface. Higher struck the sunbeams upon a bald brow of noble altitude, though lined deeply by furrows of past pain or care; and lower they smote upon his head bent over the book, and finished by falling a yard short of Mrs. Sarsfield, where she chose to have her couch in the shadow, for complexional reasons.

"Paul!"—the shadow had crept on to the lady's mental world now, and her brow has the consequence in a troubled line traced midway along—"I cannot bear that child's senseless repetitions of the same thing, over and over, perpetually. I wonder you don't get a headache. I shall, if it continues; do send him away, or go to some other place."

"Well, my dear, you see it's his first Latin verb, and he could not master it alone. But I'm sorry it has disturbed you; we will get out of hearing. Come, Bertie;" and they went into the house.

With open windows in the drawing-room was the eldest daughter, Pen, practising the piano. As she was kept chiefly at exercises of a complicated character, and at Thalberg's showiest pieces, the sounds were of the loudest; but of this noise Mrs. Sarsfield never complained. She was rigid about Pen's practising: exacted the full measure of time to the last tittle; for how could a girl make any figure in the world—have any chance of a girl's Main Chance, in fact, unless she played well? And Pen promised to be a first-class executant.

The father and son retired to a small back room, where were old boots, and lumber, and lesson-books, and large quantities of dust on every spot not actually in use. It was a sort of den devoted to the master, except when it was wanted for any other purpose. The window looked out into that portion of the garden which was cultivated by Mr. Sarsfield in vegetable-beds. And here they together conquered the indicative mood of that Latin verb, and the glad pupil was dismissed.

Bertie did not go to school; his only tutor was his father. A rare delight it was to Mr. Sarsfield to instruct the quick and eager child, with love as the great stimulus and reward on both sides. His wife wondered how he could undergo the bother, as she phrased it. But this teaching became more and more his life's pursuit, now that his older occupations as a country gentleman were cut off. And who shall tell what castles were built in Spain by the elder head for the beloved younger, while that younger lay in the legitimate land of dreams? Life for him was seen through a haze of lawn sleeves and ermine—the judge's bench or the episcopal. Mr. Sarsfield sensibly stopped short of archbishops and chancellors; by which it will be perceived that he was not blindly ambitious.

In a few minutes Bertie returned subdued from an extraneous scamper; and Mr. Sarsfield instinctively knew that his high spirits had somehow come in contact with his lady-mother, who was the iceberg in the sunshine of the child's life.

"Papa, there's a strange gentleman talking to mamma; and she told me I was to come for you."

Now was Mr. Sarsfield (who had been putting up untidy Bertie's books, according to his usual duty, dear patient father!) very near committing the blunder of making his appearance in the old brown coat. In fact, he had gone as far as the hall-door, when the thought of the criticism of his wife's glittering eye sent him back to change: what her first glance meant concerning the coat, he knew.

"An old friend, Paul. I wanted to give you an agreeable surprise," she said, with her sweet smile, which suggested a temper of unvarying summer-time. "It was so very kind of Mr. Lombard to call, was it not?"

CHAPTER II.—THE MONEYED MAN.

MR. SARSFIELD had at once recognised the tall, broad-shouldered, comfortable-looking man of middle age, who now turned on him a face that singularly contradicted the geniality of his figure, by being cold and hard and inscrutable as any coffer in the cellars of the Mint. A common face, too, without, as Mrs. Sarsfield had formerly remarked (while she fondled her own nose, in which the strength of the Boisragon lineage lay), without the smallest touch of blood in it. But in the stead there was Money. Glance, and gait, and mien were fortified with the assured strength of Money; in virtue whereof Mrs. Sarsfield of Castle-Lough now vouchsafed to call him "friend."

Time had been that she would not have owned him for an acquaintance; she perfectly remembered those huge hands serving her with spools of cotton in a shop. Of course, a person so situated was incapable of possessing ancestors; but the former stigma had long since been removed; and when Mr. Sarsfield was "in trouble" (a delicate euphemism for being close to the debtor's prison) he had saved him by a loan, for the repayment of which he held all available securities.

This last fact was in the lady's mind during the discursive conversation that followed; but she might as well have interrogated one of the aforesaid coffers as the moneyed man's face. All the business in the world might have been on his mind, and none at all might have been on his mind equally well, so far as externals told anything. He talked with imperturbability, and an absence of emotiveness, upon every matter brought forward, as if it were invoices or Acts of Parliament. The tenderest inquiries after his daughter caused no gratification in the plebeian face.

"She is at school here for the last twelve months," he observed.

"In Douglas!" exclaimed Mrs. Sarsfield. "Impossible! My dear Mr. Lombard, how unfriendly!"

"Madam?" said he, with a bend of his head.

"The idea of not telling us, when it would have been such pleasure to be attentive to the dear girl! I don't know how I shall forgive you! An orphan, too, and so young!"

"She won't be an orphan till she's deprived of me, ma'am," said downright Mr. Lombard, with emphasis on himself; "so I wouldn't call her one now, Mrs. Sarsfield."

"Oh, to be sure, certainly. I was only referring to the loss of her dear mother," was the lady's almost disconcerted reply. "You are a practical man, Mr. Lombard," with a return to the effectual sweet smile. "You have such a distinct way of putting things; I am sure you never made a mistake, for instance, about two and two make four. It would be well for others that they were as practical, perhaps;" and her eye wandered for a moment to the partner of her life. He, poor man, conscious of his want of worldly cleverness

and business habits, winced somewhat, rubbed his hands for want of anything suitable to say, and smiled at the landscape, as if he was thinking of nothing else.

"You have just hit it, madam;" and she knew that the visitor had seen that conjugal glance. "Practicality is my motto. It has made a man of Ralph Lombard, and I don't mind saying so; for I'm not above confessing myself one of the People."

Mr. Ralph Lombard, the erst shopman, was now a person of consideration. He was an enterprising man among the half-asleep. He prospered in all that he undertook. The capacious brow over that vulgar nose and mouth originated thoughts which were always successes. He had set up a flax-mill where formerly not a stalk was scutched, and it soon fed a sixth of the population. He had projected an extensive reclamation of waste lands, and already profitless tidal mud was condensing into valuable pastures. He had looked down certain mine-shafts, taken a few shares, and forthwith the lodes were productive. He had turned his attention to the fisheries, and straightway the salmon multiplied apace. And now noblemen were glad to take counsel with the successful man. They were pleased to say that he had infused new blood into the town, which began to spread brick and mortar hands along the outlying roads. Ralph Lombard had certainly raised himself above his fellows in worldly wealth and influence.

"Since you are kind enough," broke in the hard tones of the practical man, "to wish to become acquainted with my daughter—"

Nothing could please Mrs. Sarsfield more. Might she expect the great pleasure of their company at tea?

Her husband walked with his creditor into the town. Five minutes made him aware that Mr. Lombard in no-wise forgot the debt. Not that there was anything the least offensive in the manner of its assertion: if it was the embarrassment of somebody else, the debtor could not feel more at his ease with the powerful man beside him. But a sense of that power gradually wrapped him round as with iron bands. He acquiesced in everything the power proposed; he could do no otherwise. And what about selling Castle Lough, the family seat, to pay off some of the devouring incumbrances?

Mr. Lombard had means of knowing that certain parties were becoming unpleasant concerning money owed to them by Mr. Sarsfield. He would advise the sale; that was all. But the power, like iron bands, was as forcible round his debtor's heart as if he had commanded.

"You know," said a faint protest, "that I cannot do this without my son's consent."

"Your son will be of age to-morrow," was the reply. "But I don't wish there should be hurry in the matter. Think over it." And this he said knocking at the green door in a garden wall, which door was embossed with a brass plate, and bearing the superscription of the Misses Singlestick's Educational Establishment for Young Ladies. The practical man drew the finger of his glove across the long words. "'Schools' seem out of fashion," said he. For, having an unconcerned mind, without care or trial of any sort (as becomed his riches), he could afford to observe everything, you perceive.

Three words were so much in Mr. Sarsfield's ears that he was no good observer just at that moment. "Of age to-morrow." He walked up and down among the mignonette and gillyflowers inside the green door, pondering. He thought it looked very pretty. But how exactly did his creditor know when to make the application about selling Castle Lough! The iron bands felt tighter than ever; and he knew all the spirit of

the Boisragons would rise against the idea, and that, in spite of that, Castle Lough would have to go; for Ralph Lombard always carried his point. The accuracy of knowledge about young Sarsfield's age was a guarantee of the determination to which he had come. Probably it had been in his mind for years back; but he never named a matter till the needful hour: he could afford to wait, and to mature plans in silence, under the ripenings of time; which made people who were not clever afraid of the moneyed man who was.

"My daughter," said that strong clear voice for all introduction. The girl was pale and plain, with a shrinking timidity in her large grey eyes. Mr. Sarsfield's fatherly instincts pitied her on the spot, and he put aside his own trouble so far as to say, "I'm sorry we have not known previously of your being in Douglas, my dear; you might have found some variety in spending an occasional day with our young people."

"Thank you," she answered, coldly enough, but with a secret warming of heart towards the kindness which prompted the words: not that she was unused to kindness, or at least to its outward manifestations; as the sole daughter of a man who was reputed immensely rich, she found obsequiousness enough everywhere. The Misses Singlestick had a deep respect (and of course regard) for one whose quarterly bills were so large, comprising every extra, and settled so punctually from her father's office in the Irish county town where he was magnate. They were by no means hard on her about her studies, as upon the governess-pupils, who had to get up at five and take turns at sweeping out the schoolroom. The music-master was forbearing with her, and considerate; albeit she could scarcely master the alphabet of Carl Czerny, and his pencil-case was merciless on the knuckles of the half-boarders. The German mistress (with an uncertain temper) never growled unknown things in her own guttural tongue at Miss Lombard's marvellous slowness in acquiring its rudiments. Behind the scenes they said to one another that the heiress was stupid, but with bated breath, and no lessening of reverence for the money in which she had a reversionary interest, and a perception that it did not signify much to one who would be so rich. And they patiently went on, according to parental instructions, with the endeavour to teach her everything.

And what did Mr. Lombard know himself, that he should require this omnivorous mental capacity from his child? He boasted (as has been seen) that he was an eminently practical man; therefore he despised all things that he did not consider practical. Literature came into this category, and especially all appertaining to Latin and Greek. He was accustomed to say that, if he had a son, the boy should never learn a syllable of the antiquated stuff; but, having a daughter, perhaps his ideas were altered; at all events, Latin was one of the items in the quarterly bill he paid at the Educational Establishment. A daughter was in herself so very unpractical! Poor Esther had a dim perception that her father had never quite forgiven her the disappointment that she was an heiress and not an heir, and that she had lived with perseverance, while her infant brothers had died, notwithstanding the grasp of gold in which they were held. He spent some of it in erecting over them a splendid mausoleum, with an angel gathering two rosebuds, in bas-relief.

Mrs. Sarsfield was reverting to those former times while her husband and his creditor were absent. "It all began from a rich marriage, my dears," she said to Pen and Paul. She meant Mr. Lombard's prosperity; and the remark was intended as a seedling to bear fruit

hereafter in the young lives that listened. "Poor marriages are so very foolish! Your father was very well off when I married him. We drove from the church porch in our own carriage-and-four—nothing hired, you understand. I would not have been justified in marrying him otherwise; and, as my uncle Wyvern said, he had never seen a handsomer turn-out—all bays to match, with white stars, and postilions in blue and silver liveries."

Lord Wyvern was head of the ennobled branch of the Boisragons. The present peer was son of him who had made the above remark. After certain reflections on the fickleness of fortune, the lady resumed the topic of Mr. Lombard.

"The lowest of the low," she said, playing with her jewelled fingers. "Nobody had the least idea where he came from, which didn't signify, I suppose, as long as he remained merely in trade; but now, when they're talking of making him a member of Parliament, it's a different thing. People naturally inquire for his antecedents. I know everybody was greatly surprised when old Mr. Estridge, the retired draper, actually took him for a son-in-law. He had been managing the business, and become essential, you see. Then they made a firm of it, and the old gentleman went to live elsewhere; and he married again, and had a son, we heard. That was, of course, very awkward for Mr. Lombard; but his usual good fortune did not desert him: the boy died, and the daughter came in for everything, of course."

"And he has, in his turn, a daughter that will come in for everything. What a coincidence!" laughed Paul Sarsfield the younger, as he pulled his fair silken whiskers. "Not a bad speculation, I declare!"

Pen raised a warning finger. They were coming in the little wicket which gave entrance to the flower-knot in front. "Let's have a peep at the heiress," said incorrigible Paul, in anything but a whisper, as he drew the curtain aside; and the young fellow shrugged his shoulders with the air of a connoisseur as he glanced at the stunted figure which not all the exertions of the Misses Singlestick's dancing-master could render graceful. "She has need of the cash," was his comment, *sotto voce*.

But to see Mrs. Sarsfield's considerate tenderness towards their young guest was delightful. Smiles rayed upon her like sunshine. Somehow they did not warm Esther's heart as the few words of Mrs. Sarsfield's husband. She would like to have been left in a corner silent; for more than ever she felt her personal defects in presence of Pen, who took no trouble at all to conciliate or please the heiress or the moneyed man her father; yet Esther instinctively knew there was something truer about her than about the lady on the sofa, whose manners were so exquisitely sweet. An intense admiration for Pen crept into the girl's mind, and grew full blossomed into love in an hour, after the manner of the very young. Pen was doubly proud to-night, for she was conscious that her perfections and accomplishments were being displayed by her mother, perhaps with ulterior views.

Ralph Lombard did not enjoy evenings of this sort; he was unaccustomed to the relaxations of a domestic circle. When at home his ledgers and letters were his sole company, and he delighted in grinding at business until bed-time. When on his numerous journeys he studied the volume of men's characters, and managed to have the Main Chance in view there also. Hard work was his ideal; not one among the numbers he employed laboured so intensely as himself. Their toil was from sun to sun—his was never over. And if his goods were

increased, as the consequence, what profit had the owner, "save the beholding of them with his eyes"? He could really enjoy but a certain portion of his wealth—a more limited portion even than many another man could have enjoyed; for education is enlargement of capacity to enjoy. Did a hint of this strike his astute faculties when he saw Mr. Sarsfield, his poor and elderly debtor, so keenly alive to the beauty of scenery which affected himself no more than the rude painting on a staircase blind, and so deeply interested in the historic and legendary associations of Rushen and Peel Castle? The practical man saw only water-power running to waste in the cataract, and merely an old wall in the ruin. And the ability to see deeper was one that all his gold could not purchase; and he was by so much the poorer than Mr. Sarsfield, for the nonce.

SAFE ASSURANCE FOR WORKING MEN.

At the conclusion of a paper on the above subject, printed in a former number, we promised to publish some plain and simple instructions as to the course to be followed by persons desiring to insure their lives or to purchase Government annuities. The following paragraphs are condensed from the "Plain Rules" lately issued by Government.

The Postmaster-General will be the contracting party with all persons assuring under Mr. Gladstone's Act, and all transactions will be carried on through the Post Office. A person desiring to insure his life must apply for a form of proposal at any post-office open for insurance business, such offices transacting their business at the same hours as money-order offices transact theirs. The proposal form may be taken away, in order to be filled up by a friend or employer of the assurer, according to the printed instructions. In it the assurer will have to state his name, his trade or calling, where he lives, where he was born, the date of his birth, the sum for which he insures, and how he proposes to pay for the insurance. He will also have to answer in writing certain questions as to his health, occupation, etc., and the health of his relatives. If he cannot answer all these questions fully, he must state that much with regard to those he cannot so answer, and answer them to the best of his knowledge.

He must also obtain, if it is to be had, at his own cost, a certificate of his birth, either from the registrar of the district in which he was born, or from the Registrar-General at Somerset House, London. The certificate may be obtained by personal application, between the hours of ten and four, or by letter: if by letter, the writer should state that the certificate is wanted for insurance purposes, and should give the place and date of birth, and the Christian names and surnames of the parents; and postage-stamps to the value of 3s. 7d. must be enclosed for payment of the fee. If the intending assurer happens to have been born before the 30th June, 1837, or not to have been born in England or Wales, he will not be able to obtain a certificate of birth from a district registrar, or from the Registrar-General; and he must then endeavour to obtain a record of his birth or baptism from the minister of the church or chapel at which he was baptized. If he cannot do this, he must state what other means he has of proving his age; and if any respectable person who has known him from his birth will declare before a magistrate that he was born at the time stated by him, such declaration will be accepted as proof. The evidence of age produced and accepted when an assurer makes

his first proposal will be taken as sufficient when he makes further proposals.

The proposal form must also contain the names and addresses of two householders, and also of two of the assurers's employers, who can furnish information as to his health and habits to the Postmaster-General. When it is thus duly filled up, the proposal form and certificate of birth must be taken by the assurer to one of the post-offices open for insurance business, and he will there sign the declaration at the foot of the form in the presence of the postmaster. The postmaster will then forward the proposal form and certificate to the Postmaster-General in London, who, if he think fit, will direct the assurer to present himself to a medical man for examination. If the Postmaster-General shall agree to insure the life of any person, he will cause the contract or policy by which the payment on death will be secured to be delivered to that person, on payment by him of the first premium due under the contract at that one of the offices open for insurance business which the assurer shall prefer, and the premiums becoming due, from time to time, under the contract, must be paid at the same office, until the person whose life is insured gives notice that he desires to pay them at some other office. If the assurer be required by the contract to pay for the insurance of his life by a single premium, the delivery of the contract to him, on payment by him of the said premium, will be the receipt for the premium. If he be required by the contract to pay an annual premium, or to pay premiums more often than once in each year, there will be delivered to him, together with the contract, a premium receipt-book, in which the date and amount of each premium paid by him will be entered at the time of payment by the postmaster or other officer to whom the payments are made, and who will affix his signature and the dated stamp of his office to each such entry. A statement of the regulations and of the dates on which the premiums will be payable under his contract will be given to the assurer on the cover of the premium receipt-book.

All premiums due annually, or oftener than once a year, must in all cases be paid within the weeks in which the days appointed by the contracts for such payments shall fall. If an assurer fails, either from forgetfulness or any other cause, to pay the premiums due from him at the proper time, he will be informed by letter that the failure of payment has put an end to the contract, and that, if he wishes it to be renewed, he must make application accordingly on a form which will be sent to him at the same time for that purpose. The renewal of the contract will, however, cost the defaulting assurer a fine of 4s. if the sum assured is under £60, and 8s. if it exceeds £60. Assurers, therefore, must be careful to pay their premiums at proper time; and this should be specially borne in mind by persons not in the receipt of fixed or regular wages. If, after an assurer has paid the premiums due under his contract for five years or upwards, he should wish to put an end to the contract, or is unable to continue his payments, the Postmaster-General will, on his application, pay him such a sum of money (which sum will not in any case be less than one-third of the whole amount of the premiums paid by him) as shall appear by the tables framed for the purpose to be the value of the contract.

The Postmaster-General will insure lives at the premiums set down in the published tables only when the persons wishing to assure are in ordinary health and not engaged in any dangerous or unhealthy occupation. If any person, after having assured at the rate given in those tables, shall take up and follow any dangerous or

unhealthy calling, or shall go out of Europe, or go to sea as a sailor, or shall take active service as a soldier, without first obtaining leave of the Postmaster-General, he will by so doing break his contract and forfeit his claim and all the payments he may have made. But if he gives notice to the Postmaster-General of his desire to follow any one of the dangerous or unhealthy occupations, or to go out of Europe, or to take active service as a soldier, the Postmaster-General will make such arrangements with him, as to his past or future payments, as shall be right under all the circumstances. If any assured person shall die by his own hands, his contract will be cancelled, and all payments made by him will be forfeited. If assurers make their payments regularly, and fulfil all the conditions of the contract (not having been guilty of any false statement or wilful concealment at the time of making the contract), then, immediately on proof of their death, even though that death should take place immediately after payment of the first premium, the sums insured will certainly be paid to their families or representatives.

The above paragraphs refer to life insurance, by which a man may make provision for his family after his death. We must add some information with regard to annuities, or monthly allowances, which may now be purchased through the Post Office with as little trouble, and by means of which a man may make provision for his family both during his life and after his death, or he may make provision for his old age.

A person desiring to purchase an annuity or monthly allowance should apply for a proposal form at one of the post-offices opened for the business. Instructions as to the mode of filling up the form are printed in the form. An intending purchaser will, when he makes his proposal, have to produce just the same evidence of age that he would be required to give if he were desirous of effecting an insurance on his life; but he will not be required to give any information as to his health, habits, or occupation, or as to the health of his relations, and he will not be called on to submit to be examined by a medical man. The evidence of age produced and accepted, when he makes his first proposal, will be taken as sufficient when he makes further proposals.

If the Postmaster-General undertakes to grant him an annuity or monthly allowance, the arrangements for the delivery of the contract to him, and for the payment of the purchase-money by him, and the regulations as to the time at which the payments should be made by him, and as to the failure of such payments, will be nearly similar to the arrangements and regulations made for such matters in regard to life insurance, as already described. When the annuity or monthly allowance becomes payable to him, it will be paid to him half-yearly or monthly, as the case may be, at such one of the offices which have been opened for such business as he may select, on his producing a proper life certificate, signed by a justice of the peace, or by a minister of any denomination, or by a churchwarden, or by a medical man, or by a postmaster; and if he be prevented by age or illness from going to a post-office to receive his annuity or monthly allowance, it will be taken to him by an officer of the post-office. Annuities or allowances granted to married women, or to women who afterwards marry, will, when payable, be paid to such women, unless their husbands give notice in writing to the Postmaster-General of their wish to have such annuities or allowances paid to themselves.

The expense incurred by the working man, either in effecting an insurance on his life, or in purchasing an annuity or a monthly allowance, is under this Act

extremely small; the chief cost being that of obtaining a certificate of birth or baptism, or other evidence of age. In the case of annuities, however, the Postmaster-General is empowered, if he think fit, to require the purchaser to pay a fee of one shilling for every pound of annuity purchased; and the reason of this is, that the premiums fixed by the tables do not include any provision for costs and charges.

Depositors in post-office savings banks who are desirous of effecting insurances on their lives, or of purchasing immediate or deferred annuities, by the payment of a single premium, may have the whole or any part of the balance standing to their credit in the books of the post-office bank transferred to insurance or annuity account, and applied towards the payment of such single premium. By so doing they can avoid the trouble and risk of drawing cash out of one account and paying it into the other.

Lastly—and this provision is well worth the attention both of employers and employed—if any person employed in the Post Office service, or in any Government department, or by any railway company, manufacturer, or other large employer of labour, after effecting an insurance on his life, or contracting to purchase a deferred annuity or monthly allowance, under these regulations, shall desire to have his premiums or instalments deducted from his salary or wages, and paid over to the officers of the Postmaster-General, and if the persons under whom or by whom he is employed shall be willing to undertake the deduction of such premiums or instalments from his salary or wages, with the view of paying them over to the officers of the Postmaster-General, then the Postmaster-General may, if he think fit, make arrangements with the said employers for such purpose. The advantage of such arrangement to assurers will be great, as under it they will run no risk of breaking their contracts by any failure of payment. Employers desirous of thus benefiting the persons they employ may obtain the requisite information on application to the Secretary of the Post Office.

MORITZ RETZSCH.

THERE is a large volume of an old illustrated magazine lying on an ottoman; and a child's eager hands are turning the leaves in search of that favourite pabulum of childhood—"pictures." The woodcuts are such as would be deemed below par in these days of exquisite engraving, when the down on a fledgling's breast, or the faint cloud flecking an amber sunset, can be transferred from nature to a box block, with shading so delicate as almost to suggest colour. But here the lights and shadows are chiefly blotches of black or white, with the coarsest lines for all medium tints. The child is no critic. Now comes a page bearing a very pale "picture," merely a collection of outlines; looking map-like, and consequently uninteresting at first glance. The small hand is already put forth to turn it over; but a moment's gaze, and the fingers drop, the eyes become fixed with interest. A quarter of an hour's regard does not diminish the attraction. Pencil and paper are brought forth, in the vain effort to reproduce the forms which have impressed the child's imagination so strongly; and thenceforward the favourite page—consequently the soonest soiled—in the antique magazine is that which bears this etching from the designs of Moritz Retzsch.

The name was utterly beyond my pronunciation; and wherefore it has so many superfluous consonants I do not to this day comprehend. But that did not militate

against my devotion to the aforesaid drawing. I came across one of my abortive attempts to copy it a short time since, the sole remaining of a dozen efforts, and I presume the best, from its longest existence; in which case the fire was a most worthy repository for the others. The subject was chess-playing. But with what pieces, and for what a stake! At one side of a small table is seated a young man, rather pensive-looking, contemplating the board, where his array of pieces has been woefully diminished. He is no match for the astute hook-nosed adversary who sits opposite to him, and is gazing under his brows with diabolic keenness at the effect produced on the young man by his last insidious move—a move which has taken prisoner the queen, entitled Peace of Mind. Already among the captured are Love, Humility, and Innocence; but still remain to the hapless human being Faith, Truth, and Fortitude. With these, aided by some of his pawns, which are Prayers, he has to oppose all the army of the Spirit of Evil—Pride, Avarice, Irreligion, Luxury, Sensuality, and their pawns, which are Doubts. Behind the table stands a beautiful mournful angel, perchance as arbitrator, or helper, his wings half unfolded, as if ready for departure from the scene of his unavailing or unregarded interference. Perhaps the artist would suggest that aid from heaven was within reach of the victim, had he but looked upward. We have little doubt of the untold result; what a glance of fiendish triumph in the countenance of the Tempter!

We would fain hope that persons on the debatable land of temptation have looked at this pictured allegory, and laid to heart its obvious lessons. One who beheld the original from the artist's hand speaks of it as "uttering, in the universal language of the eye, to the universal mind of man, a truth of appalling interest." Retzsch modestly called these designs "Phantasien" fancies. If Art would oftener give such to the world, her moral influence would be greater.

Moritz Retzsch was born at Dresden as far back as 1779, and he completed the cycle of his life there in 1857, having never travelled far from his natal city. But, though he drew inspiration from no foreign sources, he became one of the greatest designers of Germany, partly because of natural genius, partly by a diligent use of all the means of education within his reach. During childhood he was incessantly drawing and carving on wood imitations of almost everything that he saw, yet was near leaving his artistic pursuits when he became older for the wild life of a jäger, or huntsman, in the royal forests. This was just an ebullition of his great love of Nature, "and impatience of the restraints of artificial life." Afterwards he found that he could satisfy both these impulses in his own field of art.

Before twenty he was a diligent student in that Dresden Academy at which he became, in 1824, Professor of Painting. Long previous to the latter promotion, Retzsch found himself utterly impoverished by the Continental wars of Napoleon, and forced to depend on his talents for a livelihood. Not only did he thus support himself, but also a large set of ruined relatives; for the high moral principles which pervade the art also pervaded the conduct of Moritz Retzsch.

The Dresden Gallery is famed for its paintings: some of the masterpieces of the world were open to the young German there. Yet he struck out a style for himself, in which he neither imitated any predecessor nor has had a successful copyist: probably because few artists have brought so much *intellect* to bear upon their subject; few have been able to correct their poetic imaginations with so much solid common sense. This is

symbolized in the very finish of his performances: the absolute accuracy of drawing and carefulness of detail, nothing hazy, imperfect, or blurred over, even where the utmost luxuriance of fancy might have been deemed impatient of the cold process of manipulation. A good lesson this to the rising generation at our schools of art.

We are told that in his workshop a small panel hung on which was depicted the head of an angel smiling. This was one of the artist's monitors. "I am often pursued by dark fancies and melancholy forebodings," he would say; "so I resolved to paint a face that should smile upon me out of heaven." What Christian reads these words without desiring that the gifted artist had the knowledge of that eternal sunshine of the presence of a heavenly Father, and a precious Saviour, truly smiling upon him from the celestial glory, and transmuting all those earthly clouds to the overshadowings of Divine love?

Another realized idea of his was a portrait of the Angel of Death. Beautiful to perfectness—awful beyond words to express: from depths of darkness beneath the brows looked forth "lovely living eyes:" an infinite sadness dwelt in the curves of the lips. It was the human conception uncorrected by the Divine truth. Paul would hardly recognise here the change whereof he speaks in the glowing words, "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

The works by which Retzsch is chiefly known in England are his etchings in outline illustrative of Goethe, Schiller, and of our own Shakespeare. He also illustrated the "Lenore" of Bürger. We have an interesting description of him and his domestic life in the late Mrs. Jamesen's "Sketches of Art." She had gone to visit him; by invitation, at his farmhouse on the Elbe, and there was introduced to his wife, "as pretty a piece of domestic poetry as one shall see on a summer's day." The story goes that the artist actually carried out the dream of many an artist and poet before him, by educating a model wife for himself from childhood, and that the experiment succeeded. "I turned over admiringly the beautiful designs with which her husband had decorated her album, and shall not easily forget the looks of veneration and love with which she regarded him, and the expression of kindly, delighted sympathy with which she smiled on me. As for the album itself, queens might have envied her such homage."

Some of the emblematic drawings it contained were most suggestive. Hope was represented by a group of children peeping under a hat for a butterfly, which they fancy they have caught; while, lo! the coveted insect is hovering over their heads out of reach. Another sketch represented "the Enigma of Human Life: the genius of humanity reclining on the back of a gigantic sphinx, of which the features are averted, and partly veiled by a cloud; he holds a rose half-withered in his hand, and looks up brightly towards two butterflies which have escaped from their chrysalis state into the sunlit air; at his feet are a reptile and a dead bird, emblematic of sin and death."

What an incomparably nobler answer than these allegoric fancies contain is given to the grand "Enigma of Human Life" in the words of the old Westminster Catechism! Although the sentence is so hackneyed, yet will we quote it again: "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and enjoy him for ever!" No mere purposeless sporting in an eternal existence of joy is the Christian's hope; but the love of a living Saviour is to be his perpetual reward,

"And to serve him is the one delight
Eternity cannot cloy."

Varieties.

EFFECTS OF IMAGINATION.—Once, at a large dinner-party, Mr. Rogers was speaking of an inconvenience arising from the custom, then commencing, of having windows formed of one large sheet of plate-glass. He said that a short time ago he sat at dinner with his back to one of these single panes of plate-glass: it appeared to him that the window was wide open, and such was the force of imagination, that he actually caught cold. It so happened that I was sitting just opposite to the poet. Hearing this remark, I immediately said, "Dear me, how odd it is, Mr. Rogers, that you and I should make such a very different use of the faculty of imagination. When I go to the house of a friend in the country, and unexpectedly remain for the night, having no night-cap, I should naturally catch cold. But, by tying a bit of pack-thread tightly round my head, I go to sleep imagining that I have a night-cap on; consequently I catch no cold at all." This sally produced much amusement in all around, who supposed I had improvised it; but, odd as it may appear, it is a practice I have often resorted to. Mr. Rogers, who knew full well the respect and regard I had for him, saw at once that I was relating a simple fact, and joined cordially in the merriment it excited.—*Mr. Babbage.*

TENBY.—The tongue of land on which Tenby lies is washed on the north and south by the sea, and consequently its atmosphere is thoroughly marine. It is singularly free from fogs both by land and sea, and in the depth of winter frequently enjoys a purity of sky and a power of sun known to very few English towns. As to temperature, it appeared, during the most severe frost known in England for many years, that Tenby was only 14° lower than Torquay, while its temperature exceeded that of Bournemouth by 6° or 8°, and other less favoured parts of the kingdom by 23½°. In the writer's experience, extending over sixteen years, water has never frozen within the house, even in rooms without fires, although this has occurred at Pau, in the south of France. The water supply, though insufficient in quantity, is excellent in quality, and probably unsurpassed in purity, unless, perhaps, by that derived from Loch Katrine. Being open to every side, Tenby has probably more than its due proportion of wind, and it wants walks and drives that are sheltered from the east; but this wind has not the cruel withering character which it so often displays in England. And it must not be concealed that Tenby is very deficient in level ground, on which invalids, and especially those suffering from chest affections, can take exercise; and this in many cases has been found a great and serious privation.—*Mason's "Guide to Tenby and its Neighbourhood."*

AN ASTRONOMER'S PRAYER.—These are the last words in Kepler's "Harmony of the World":—"Thou who, by the light of nature, hast kindled in us the longing after the light of Thy grace, in order to raise us to the light of Thy glory, thanks to Thee, Creator and Lord, that thou lettest me rejoice in Thy works. Lo, I have done the work of my life with that power of intellect which Thou hast given. I have recorded to men the glory of Thy works, as far as my mind could comprehend their infinite majesty. My senses were awake to search, as far as I could, with purity and faithfulness. If I, a worm before thine eyes, and born in the bonds of sin, have brought forth anything that is unworthy of Thy counsels, inspire me with Thy spirit that I may correct it. If, by the wonderful beauty of Thy works, I have been led into boldness; if I have sought my own honour among men as I advanced in the work which was destined to Thine honour, pardon me in kindness and charity, and by Thy grace grant that my teaching may be to Thy glory and the welfare of all men. Praise ye the Lord, ye heavenly harmonies; and ye that understand the new harmonies, praise the Lord. Praise God, O my soul, as long as I live. From Him, through Him, and in Him is all, the material as well as the spiritual—all that we know and all that we know not yet—for there is much to do that is undone."

COST OF MANAGEMENT IN CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, LONDON.—The average cost per child in this school may be compared with the average cost in other great schools—and, if the kind of keep and education are considered, the comparison will, we have no doubt, result in a verdict favourable to Christ's Hospital—as an example of enlightened, liberal, yet not wasteful management. The average number of children maintained and educated in the London and Hertford establishments in 1863 was 1108, and the average expenditure per child was £42 5s. 4½d.—*City Press.*